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O/NE HISTORY

Date 17 Jan 91 HRP 89-2

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The Office of Reports and Estimates began to operate under the Central Intelligence Group in February 1946 when it published its first Daily Summary of current intelligence. To this Daily, it then added a Weekly Summary, and, for over a year it virtually confined itself to these two functions. It was felt that the organization was too young and too under-staffed to do anything more. To do this much was possible because (a) the Daily was nothing more than an intelligent, brief summarization of selected foreign dispatches furnished by the State, War, and Navy departments, and (b) the Weekly, while it indulged in ~~some commentary~~ in a certain amount of commentary and evaluation, was in the main, a mere digest of the events of the past week ~~based mostly~~ based mostly on classified rather than public information. Since the production of such limited current intelligence required neither a large staff, extensive files, nor unusual expert competence, ORE felt that it could continue to produce it until such time as its organization had been built up to the point where it could do more. The President, for whom it was mainly intended, appeared satisfied with what he received.

Meanwhile, intensive efforts were being made to staff and organize ORE in such a way that it could produce finished "reports" and "estimates" which were

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presumably to be its principal preoccupation. There were, however, formidable difficulties in the way of doing so. The President's Executive Order of \_\_\_\_\_ 1946 had represented an agreement in principle on the part of the governmental departments concerned that there should be a central intelligence agency. No very clear agreement had been reached as to how this agency was to carry out its functions or precisely what its functions were. Although between 1946 and 1950 ORE had numerous directive which were designed to prescribe its functions, none of them was entirely ~~clear~~ precise. For example, ~~although~~ ORE was charged with the production of "national intelligence", but no definition of the term was given beyond ~~that~~ the obvious admonition that it should "transcend the interests of any single ~~department~~ intelligence agency. Hence it was clear that the military departments should furnish intelligence that was purely military in character and that the State Department should furnish intelligence that was purely political in character, but whenever the estimate involved both fields, it should be furnished ~~by~~, in coordinated form, by CIA. Such a starting point, however, furnished only a partial guide as to what CIA should produce because a study of the relations between Uruguay and Nepal would involve both fields but would not necessarily constitute a national estimate in relation to its importance to national policy. No directive, meanwhile, specified either that

ORE should or should not continue to furnish current intelligence, should or should not concentrate on any particular sort of estimate, or should or should not ~~write~~ write general intelligence reports or deal in services of common concern.

~~None of these with rather indefinite mission~~

With this rather indefinite mission, ORE was expanded between 1947 and 1949 from about 60 persons to about 600. While the expansion was going on, the concept of ORE's function changed from time to time in certain particulars, and the Office underwent certain minor or major reorganizations. During this period, in addition to the problems of what ORE was to do and how it was to do it, the major problem was that of recruiting. Fundamentally, the ~~diff~~ ~~pro~~ difficulties in recruiting were two: <sup>(1)</sup> since few if any persons in the United States had ever held a job that was even the equivalent of what he would have to do in ORE, the normal standard of past success in the work for which a man was hired was missing, and (2) it was frequently unknown exactly what functions a prospective employee would perform. In many jobs, area experience was, or was thought to be, essential; yet it was quite evident that the person with the most area experience was not necessarily the one with the greatest competence in analyzing and setting down conclusions concerning that area. Similarly, the man with ~~the greatest ability in research~~ with the highly desirable ability in research might have neither the experience in

the area nor to distill his research into an estimate. The recruiting problem, complicated as it was by the security clearance problem, was extremely difficult and led to a highly unbalanced ~~and~~ staff composed of highly competent people, mediocre employees, and far too many incompetents, too many of whom occupied key positions.

After its first eighteen months, <sup>many changes, many trials, and many errors</sup> what was ~~actually~~ to be the final organization in effect of ORE emerged. The core of the organization was six ~~general~~ <sup>divisions</sup> regional ~~branches~~ to cover intelligence ~~coming~~ from all parts of the world. In addition, there were four ~~three~~ functional divisions to take care of special problems in economics, transportation, and international organizations/ <sup>and cartography.</sup> For a while, what is now the Office of Scientific Intelligence was a division under ORE, and ORE controlled many of the functions of the Office of Collection and Dissemination. To insure the coherent operation of these divisions and to govern the relations of CIA with other parts of the intelligence structure, the Assistant Director had what was in effect a staff containing three components: the Current Intelligence Group which published the two Summaries, the Staff Intelligence Group which published the Reports and Estimates, and the Plans and Policies group which advised on ORE policies generally

Chiefly because ORE was for such a long period forced to concentrate on current intelligence, it was difficult when the time came to produce actual

estimates, to break away from the routine of ~~examining~~ banding all efforts within the Divisions toward furnishing acceptable material for the Daily and Weekly Summaries. Realization was very slow in coming that current intelligence, as compared with intelligence estimates was a routine, subordinate function of ORE. For a period of possibly a year, priorities within the Division were always allocated to current as opposed to what was called "staff" intelligence.

~~Meanwhile, ORE had acquired a variety of functions probably anticipated by those who had originally established it. The first and perhaps most important was that of producing Situation Reports.~~

As actual estimates began to be produced, problems mounted. To begin with, there was the problem of ~~what~~ the questions to which estimates should be addressed. Because the ORE divisions were at first unwilling to produce any estimates at all, and because the Staff Intelligence Group had no guidance as to what might be required, the Staff Intelligence Group was inclined to accept what it could get. Hence, if the Latin American Division volunteered a prediction on the results of a forthcoming election in Venezuela, the staff was likely to accept it as better than no estimate at all. Next was the problem of recasting draft estimates that were submitted in such a way that they would be acceptable to all interested divisions, the staff, and the assistant director. finally, and perhaps most

difficult of all, was the problem of coordination of the IAC agencies.

The task of inter-agency coordination fell, perhaps by default, to the Staff Intelligence Group. There were, of course, precedents to follow in this function---chiefly in JIC procedures during the war---but actually, the post-war situation was so different, and the post-war intelligence structure so lacking and positive directives on the means of accomplishing coordination so different, that ORE was starting off on an uncharted course without navigational instruments.

At first, ORE circulated draft estimates to the IAC agencies by messenger, requesting comments, tried to construct a draft satisfactory to all concerned on the basis of comments received, and recirculated for formal concurrence. This method proved to be most unsatisfactory because it was distressingly slow and productive of unnecessary misunderstandings. The theory was then advanced that if drafts were "informally" coordinated in advance as among the several experts concerned, a draft could be circulated that would be concurred in as a matter of course. As plausible as it was, this theory did not work out in practice. It was decided, therefore, that rather than attempt to effect coordination by mail, it should be done by conference.

Thus when an ORE draft was completed, it was circulated to the agencies with a request that they send representatives to a meeting to be held at a given time. Participants at these meetings were the relevant agency analysts, the

ORE analysts directly responsible for the estimate, and a representative of ORE's Staff Intelligence Group who occupied the chair. The chairman of the meeting, in nor did he have any vested interest in the estimate as written. other words was not, like the rest, an expert on the subject of the meeting. This choice was deliberately made in the theory that such a chairman could act as a moderator whose sole aim was to steer the meeting as efficiently and expeditiously as possible to a successful close. The new method was far more successful than those previously tried, but the time between the completion of an ORE estimate and its final publication was still disappointingly slow because (a) the Agencies insisted on at least five days---usually more---to study the draft before the meeting; (b) one or more of the Agencies usually failed to meet its deadline; (c) it was not always possible to reach agreement in a single meeting; (d) the process of typing, proofreading, duplicating, packaging, and delivering drafts, corrected drafts, and re-corrected drafts was time-consuming; (e) the time was usually considerable that elapsed between agreement reached ~~with~~ at meetings with the IAC representatives, and final agreement---or often disagreement---reached on the part of their chiefs, and (f) the mere process of printing accounted for at least twenty four hours.